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John A. Aubuchon  
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John A. Aubuchon

REEL LXIII

Including changes and corrections offered with memorandum of March 11, 1964

[START OF TAPE 63, SIDE 1]

Herbert Evison: This is Herbert Evison. Today is the 13th of November 1962, and this morning I am in the office of the superintendent of Death Valley National Monument, which is in the new and charming combination administrative office building and visitor center. The superintendent is with me. He is John A. Aubuchon, who came here only three or four months ago. And, John, how about starting this off with a quick recital of your career in the National Park Service, including how you happened to get into it?

John Aubuchon: Well, Herb, I came back from World War II as a major in the Army, and during the time I had been overseas my wife had served at Mesa Verde as a museum aide collaborator. She had done this because she was seeking a home with friends, and we had been friendly with the majority of the people at Mesa Verde for a long time previous to this. I settled down at Mesa Verde awaiting confirmation of my anticipated regular Army commission; all of the necessary paperwork and everything had gone through for regular Army commission; but, the longer I stayed at Mesa Verde the less I began to think of the long-range career as an Army officer. Don Watson, Jess Nusbaum, Jean Pinkley and many of the very fine people at Mesa Verde — Erik Reed, who was not at Mesa Verde but also came through — convinced me that some of the things that the Park Service had to offer were far superior to what I could ever anticipate by going back and making a regular thing out of the Army.

John Aubuchon: So ultimately in a matter of a few weeks I had to make a choice; they gave me notice that I was to appear before the board to either accept or reject a regular Army commission. I waited until the very last possible moment and sent them a telegram saying I had changed my mind.

John Aubuchon: I then went to work on the ruins stabilization crew at Mesa Verde with a group of Navajo Indians helping me on this, and with great joy and delight. So, I spent quite a bit of time in the early spring months of 1946 at Mesa Verde on ruins stabilization. Finally then came the day when I entered on duty as a seasonal naturalist or archaeologist at Mesa Verde and continued throughout the summer on a seasonal basis, then submitted an application for park ranger job and was accepted, and went to Aztec Ruins; served there for a matter of about three or four months, which was fine because we were very well acquainted with Aztec and preferred a new area, while I had never worked there as a park ranger I had been around Aztec and explored the ruins and knew the area very well. Both my wife and I thought something new would be delightful, and fortunately about that same time we were sent to Walnut Canyon to work with Paul Beaubien. The association and relationship with Paul Beaubien was very, very enjoyable and enlightening.

- John Aubuchon: We were at Walnut Canyon for about two-and-a-half years. During that period, I was assigned on a temporary basis to Tumacácori to work with Earl Jackson during the winter months.
- John Aubuchon: We went from there then to my first superintendency, which was El Morro in the spring of 1949. We were there only a little over a year when we were sent to Navajo National Monument, where we stayed for about three-and-a-half years.
- John Aubuchon: From Navajo to Canyon de Chelly National Monument, and it just so happened that that particular sequence of assignments was exactly what my wife and I had decided we would select for ourselves if the Park Service had given us a choice.
- John Aubuchon: Then from Canyon de Chelly we went to Custer Battlefield in 1950 in the spring; were there from May in '56 until November of 1958, at which time we transferred to the very wonderful assignment in Hawaii and were in Hawaii until August 25 of this year, at which time then we accepted the promotion and transfer to Death Valley.
- Herbert Evison: Well, one thing that would impress anybody, I think, listening to that recital extending over just a little over sixteen years, would be the extraordinary number of areas in which you have served; another would be the great variety of areas, and yet also the number of areas that you have served in which are associated with pre-history — Walnut Canyon, Canyon de Chelly, Navajo; there isn't very much, I guess, at Tumacácori, but certainly those three are of extraordinary archaeological interest. You are not, I take it, an academically trained archaeologist.
- John Aubuchon: That is correct. The interest has stemmed from association — has been a long-standing interest. I think everybody has at least a casual interest in archaeology. I met and married a girl whose mother was a Methodist missionary on the Navajo Indian Reservation, which helped immeasurably because her interests were my interests and both of us together found that this was an interest that we shared more than just casually; it was very important to us and one that we pursued not as pothunters, I'll have you know, but we did pursue the interest of merely surface investigation and by association with such people as Jess Nusbaum and Eric Reed, Charley Steen, Beaubien—
- Herbert Evison: Al Lancaster?

John Aubuchon: Al Lancaster, Jean Pinkley at Mesa Verde; innumerable persons like this, and with the persons who represented or associated with and represented the Museum of Northern Arizona — Joe Brew from time to time, and anthropologists from Harvard and various areas when we were at El Morro and they were making the Harvard Ramah Survey.

Herbert Evison: Making the what?

John Aubuchon: The Harvard Ramah — the El Morro Ramah Survey, which was an anthropological study that was taking place — that took place in the area over about a three-year period of time.

Herbert Evison: How do you spell that Ramah?

John Aubuchon: Ramah, that little town right near El Morro National Monument.

John Aubuchon: By my association with these various and sundry people; at least, while not having had academic background of archaeology, I ended up with what I consider to be — and the Park Service evidently did too — a somewhat acceptable level of archaeological background as far as providing interpretive information is concerned. And this led the Park Service some time in my early career to classify me as being eligible to accept park archaeologist jobs. I realized that to compete on a professional basis with academically trained archaeologists would not necessarily be to my advantage in the long run and did accept administrative and protective type jobs instead of holding out purely for interpretive jobs. I preferred the interpretive work and I really think that I can do a very good job in that line. However, I do like the assignments I have had in the archaeological areas because I could do both the administrative and interpretive work at the same time.

Herbert Evison: John, your career has brought you in contact with the American Indian in a number of places and I am sure that out of that association with the Indians must have developed some interesting incidents as well as perhaps some very interesting friendships. I think I would just like to turn you loose now to get onto the tape some of your recollections of your association with the Indians.

John Aubuchon: Well, the majority of things that I remember concerning them are those items of an extremely interesting and personal nature as far as my wife and I are concerned.

John Aubuchon: Beginning way back, oh, actually before the war, I had associated and worked with Navajo Indians and so had my wife to a great extent, and the incidents that stick with us the longest probably revolve around Navajos, at Navajo National Monument.

- John Aubuchon: While we were there, we had a Navajo Indian by the name of Pipeline. He had gotten this name as a result of having at one time served time in the penitentiary, and while he was in the penitentiary, they taught him to speak a little bit of English, but he understood more than he spoke of the language. But upon his return to the Reservation after having served his time, the government insisted that he take some kind of a job that would pay and keep him busy and keep him out of trouble again. He accepted a job up in Utah some place and worked on the pipeline construction project. Upon completion of the job, he returned to the Reservation and he talked so much about the pipeline job that he was on that the local Indians called him that; from then on that became his actual name, Pipeline.
- John Aubuchon: Well, he was quite a fellow. If he had been a white man and had had the opportunity to have learned the ways of white men, he probably would have ended up being another John D. Rockefeller or somebody like that. He was a very sharp shrewd businessman, an extremely capable fellow. He was involved with lending money and other little projects, some of which weren't entirely on the legal side, possibly. At any rate, Pipeline was quite an operator.
- John Aubuchon: Among his other functions was taking visitors to Keet Seel. He had the horseback concession, if you want to call it that, except there was no actual concession but we gave him preferential treatment on hauling visitors to Keet Seel by horseback simply because he had the horses or he had the influence to get a number of horses to take even large parties back there.
- John Aubuchon: There was one problem with him in that he didn't always conduct the visitors through the ruin and back in a manner that entirely suited me. He would ride ahead of them quite a ways and constantly wave and call to the visitors to hurry and catch up, the object being that he wanted them to make the trip to Keet Seel ruin and back to headquarters as quickly as possible so that his day would end and he would be on his way home after having earned his fee.
- John Aubuchon: He continued to do this, and I had asked the visitors to let me know if he continued, and he persisted. I told him if he didn't stop, I was going to get somebody else to do the work. And ultimately then of course I made my promise to him equally good: I refused to solicit his horses or his business when visitors wanted to go to Keet Seel and gave the business to someone else.

John Aubuchon: After a long summer of this Pipeline realized he had lost out on the money, and the next season he came around early in the spring bringing me a nice big chunk of beef that he had recently butchered; it was delicious meat. We drank coffee and discussed everything, and he decided that Aubuchon wasn't such a bad egg and I decided that Pipeline wasn't such a bad egg, and that we would try it again if he would conduct the visitors to Keet Seel on my basis.

John Aubuchon: He did this, but during the middle of the summer then he had a large group of people who went to the ruin and when they came back they offered to pay me — we figured out how much they owed Pipeline and they handed the money to me to give to Pipeline, and I said, "No, let's don't do it this way." Pipeline was standing right there. "The Park Service has absolutely no interest in this financially; we merely make the arrangements for you. We have made the arrangements now between you and Pipeline; this is his fee; you owe the money to him; you pay the money directly to him."

John Aubuchon: They handed the money to Pipeline and Pipeline took it, counted it, found out that the amount was accurate; he peeled off a \$5 or \$10 bill most reluctantly and kind of folded it up in his hand and pretended to sneak it into my hand, which embarrassed me no end. And the old cuss came out away ahead on that, and I kept saying, "No, no, no," and Pipeline kept saying, "Yes, this is yours." I don't know whether the visitors really believed me or believed Pipeline, but he certainly put me in an extremely awkward position and he took fiendish glee in telling all his friends about it and they kidded me no end about my cut from Pipeline. He was a terrific operator.

John Aubuchon: One day he stayed at the house late in the evening. We had house guests and my wife was getting quite anxious to have dinner, and Pipeline just kept hanging around, said he was sick, didn't want to walk home. We had turned his horses loose and they had of course wandered right on back to the hogan. He lived down the road about five miles. I had told him not to do this, and that the next time he turned his horses loose it was up to him to find his own way home. But he said he was sick, and he wouldn't leave. We had fed him frequently enough, and with the guests we had that night my wife didn't want to include him at dinner. I wasn't interested either, of course.

John Aubuchon: I made up my mind I just wouldn't take him home, but under pressure from my wife to get dinner under way I went out and said, "Well, okay, I'll take you home." We had two or three saddles and we threw them in the back of the Jeep, drove down the road, and when we got near his hogan Pipeline began to say, "Well, Aubuchon is a nice man; I like Aubuchon," going through this song and dance and buttering me up a little

bit. When we came to the point of stopping and letting him out, I stopped the Jeep and he was still talking along about this same thing, about what a wonderful friend that Pipeline and Aubuchon were. When he got out of the Jeep I said, "Oh, Pipeline, you're an old poop." And he said, "No, Aubuchon is poop." I don't think I really left Navajo ahead of old Pipeline. He was an extremely sharp old boy.

John Aubuchon: About that same time, when we stopped having Pipeline conduct the visitors to Keet Seel, an Indian down in the valley wanted to take over the concession, the privilege of hauling visitors to the ruins. He had few horses; he had a very mean disposition; he had been in trouble with people from time to time, and he drank an awful lot, and he had shared some responsibility in having beaten another Indian at a dance at one time, beaten the poor fellow to the point where he ultimately died, and he had had his little tour of duty in the pen too. He wanted to take the visitors to the ruin. We had no way of contacting him without actually hiking down into the canyon about three miles and back to let him know that these visitors wanted to go, and he frequently was not at home; so, this wasn't at all feasible to try to involve him in conducting visitors to the ruin by horseback.

Herbert Evison: Excuse me. You say down in the canyon. Is that Tsegi?

John Aubuchon: That's Tsegi, and then on up Keet Seel Canyon to the ruin. He accepted "no" while he was sober, but he would get drunk and this would come to mind, and it disturbed him quite a bit. He would come around quite perturbed about it. The only trouble we ever had with an Indian any place of any serious nature was with this one particular individual. And he would, when drunk, come to the house and threaten me — he never threatened my wife — but he would make threatening remarks that he would come back and he was going to shoot Aubuchon and he was going to do this and do that; but he never actually got around to it, for which of course I am duly thankful. He was a mean character.

John Aubuchon: He was given practically everything he wanted when he went to the trading post. In that frame of mind and when he was drunk. They were happy to appease him and get him out of there. The trader used a carbon dioxide fire extinguisher on him a time or two instead of an actual weapon. He would shoot a spray of carbon dioxide toward the man, and it made a funny little noise and covered him with foam and messed him up a little bit, and he was frightened of the thing; and this was a very good means of warding him off. But that particular individual is the only one that ever caused us any serious concern while on the Reservation.

Herbert Evison: You must have had, then, a good many rather interesting and friendly contacts in there, I judge.

John Aubuchon: We had terrific friendly contacts with the people. They were perfectly normal nice people, and all in the world they wanted was equal treatment. We had the job then, living at the end of the road as we did in a somewhat isolated area, of taking care of many of their little chores that we would normally expect anybody to do for themselves. They didn't speak or read or write English and didn't understand what it was all about, so we found ourselves in a position of filling out many requests for tax exemptions, many income tax forms that had been delinquent for several years. The U.S. government would continually write to them and ask them to fulfill the requirements of submitting a tax return right away or they would be in jail. Well, some of these tax forms were several years old and the final notices had been piling up and piling up until ultimately, they would happen to think, "Well, we'll stop by at the Aubuchon's with this." This is one of the jobs that my wife did extremely well, was to help keep up with their income tax forms, requests for unemployment compensation, and all sorts of things along that line.

John Aubuchon: We had a workable arrangement with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, and they had no direct supervisor who worked in that immediate area. That area was assigned to a district supervisor, but it was so far out from where he normally conducted his activities that we sometimes performed for him. This involved informing the individuals of their rights to cut logs in this place or to cut fence posts in that place, grazing their sheep within certain given districts, and this sort of thing. So, we interceded and assisted to a great extent for the Bureau of Indian Affairs in their activities in working with the Indians.

Herbert Evison: These other kinds of assistance that you gave, aren't they the sort of thing that the Indians largely call upon a trader for?

John Aubuchon: Well, many of them were, I suppose. In fact, I suppose they would have been called upon. We were involved with all who lived in our vicinity, and this population fluctuated. We were involved to the extent of occasionally hauling them to the hospital, treating the children when they were sick, treating the adults when they were sick.

John Aubuchon: One time we took a horseback trip to Keet Seel, quite a number of us, and as we returned home we passed a hogan down in the bottom of the canyon where a family was living, and one of his teenage daughters came out and stood alongside the trail and let everyone ride past but me. As I approached, shyly and reluctantly she stepped out from behind the bush and told me that her father was sick. And I found out then — I had a

limited knowledge of Navajo — that her father was sick because he had had an insect in his ear that had flown in during the night. The government had just distributed quite a number of surplus aerosol bombs that were left over from the war in the Pacific. He had been told that the aerosol bomb was good for killing bugs; since he had an active bug in his ear, he directed the spray into his ear to kill the bug. However, the Freon gas in the aerosol bomb has a very, very high rate of evaporation, so high that in the Pacific we used it occasionally to cool our beer to a drinkable temperature. And in this case, it meant that he ended up by practically freezing a small portion of his ear and it was extremely painful.

John Aubuchon: She wanted to know what he should do about it, and I said I would like to look at her father's ear and see, and she said we couldn't do that now because he had gotten so frantic that he had ridden off to see somebody else. He had ridden to a medicine man who had performed a small ceremony and had taken a pair of tweezers made from wood of juniper tree and had actually extracted the dead bug. As the day had worn on and the fellow's ear had thawed out; everything was all right eventually. We told her to have the father wash the ear out with a warm salt solution and come on up to the house, and if he wasn't better, we would take him to the doctor. But everything solved itself. But those are some of the little problems and aspects that we became involved in with the Navajo and our white man medicine.

John Aubuchon: A Navajo would take one aspirin because he had a headache; if he had a real bad headache, he would take four or five at a time and take four or five more in just a few minutes, figuring he would get over it just that much more quickly. They didn't always necessarily wait for medication to really take effect. If one was good, two should be much better.

Herbert Evison: I was just going to ask you, John, if the Park Service didn't occasionally employ Navajos. Matter of fact, I knew of one who was a seasonal ranger when I was in Navajo in late 1948, but there must have been others.

John Aubuchon: Yes. It seemed that Jimmy Brewer, who was superintendent at Navajo before I went there, and I got about the same idea the same year. He hired a seasonal ranger by the name of Seth Bigman at Navajo National Monument, while I hired a young man by the name of Ed Ladd, a Zuni Indian, at El Morro. We both did this both 1948, early in the season. And the Navajo then at Navajo National Monument, Seth Bigman, worked for the Park Service as a seasonal ranger that year and the following year, and then he was given a permanent job by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. In 1950 we had to recruit a new Navajo seasonal ranger, who was Hubert Laughter. He was a practicing medicine man, wore his hair in a chongo knot and wore the Park Service uniform with great style and much appeal

to the visitors. He was a very pleasant young man and he had been in the Pacific during the war and had a great sense of humor and was an absolute hit with the visitors because of his capabilities. He was perfectly free of any reservations concerning speaking about the Navajo religion or the Navajo way of life. He would tell the visitors anything they wanted to know up to the point of sometimes going into enough detail to be a wee bit embarrassing for the person who asked. He was extremely free with information; and a very, very capable young man.

Herbert Evison: Isn't that pretty unusual?

John Aubuchon: Yes. The Navajo generally are somewhat reticent and shy. Seth Bigman had been a little shy, not to an objectionable degree by any means, but more so than Hubert. Hubert, ultimately, since we had nothing but a seasonal job to offer, ended up working for the Navajo police and he is still a policeman on the Navajo Reservation. He had to cut his hair, because long hair for a policeman is quite a detriment to the performance of his job; someone can grab hold of it and swing you around. He wears his hair cut short now.

John Aubuchon: His brother, Robert, is now a seasonal park ranger at Navajo National Monument. He too is a war veteran; he was over in Germany.

John Aubuchon: Hubert was an outstanding example of the good Navajo boys that were willing to learn, who could drive a vehicle. However, he had had a smattering of mechanical ability but not enough to make him an entirely dependable maintenance man on a vehicle. For example, one day he came into the office, and he said, "Aub, when you want to loosen a nut you always turn it to the left, don't you?" And I said, "Surely, that's understandable." And a few minutes later he came back, and he said, "Now that's right: when you loosen a nut, you turn it to the left." Well, I was busy working on some kind of red tape for the Southwestern Monuments headquarters and I assured him again: "to loosen it you turn it to the left."

John Aubuchon: Well, pretty soon he came in with four bolts from the wheel of a Jeep from the left-hand side that he had twisted off because Aubuchon said they turned to the left. He had turned them, and the only thing is he was tightening them all the time and broke off four of the five before he actually decided he had better question me again. This was the sort of thing that happened.

John Aubuchon: One day the vehicle was sputtering; there was water in the gasoline, and he decided that the wires leading from the distributor to the spark plug didn't follow the same sequence that he remembered that they did on GMC trucks during World War II. He proceeded to change the wiring;

took them from the distributor cap and changed the arrangement to the spark plug. Well, of course this only increased the problem tremendously and the darned truck wouldn't run. We had to really work at it to figure out the firing order and get it all straightened out again. But his intentions were wonderful; it was just that his skill and ability along that line was somewhat limited.

Herbert Evison: Were there any other Navajo employees there or at Canyon de Chelly?

John Aubuchon: Yes. At Navajo, for example, I arrived June 25<sup>th</sup>; Luis Gastellum came up the 7th of July and told me that we had money to build an additional bedroom to the house, an office and garage, and they couldn't do it by contract and so would I undertake it by force account, which I agreed we would do. This meant then that we went out and immediately hired a group of Navajo laborers to quarry stone, and a group of Navajo and Hopi Indians as stonemasons. At that time there was only one man working there who spoke any English and that was Seth Bigman, so I turned the visitors over to Seth and immediately began to use what little Navajo I had learned in the past and had to pick up a heck of a lot more fast, because I had this labor crowd of about twelve or fifteen men and the only way I could get any work out of them was to tell them and show them what to do and to put them to work. So, we had quite a crew at Navajo for a while.

[END OF TAPE 63, SIDE 1]

[START OF TAPE 63, SIDE 2]

John Aubuchon: When we started our construction of the house, the maintenance wage rate was 75 cents an hour; immediately when we started construction, we had to pay a construction wage rate which was established at \$1.50 an hour, just exactly twice what the men had previously been given. The laborers, realizing that they were getting twice the money that they had in the past, plus a little prodding from me, put out practically twice as much work as they had in the past. They arrived and they actually started work at 8 o'clock, where before they might still be unsaddling their horse at 8 o'clock, and they worked dutifully right through the full eight hours and really put out, because they understood that they were getting twice as much money and that they actually had to perform about twice as much work, and they really did.

John Aubuchon: We got the bedroom, garage, and office addition to the house all done on force account within the funds allotted, and we built the addition for about half of what the contract price had been on it.

John Aubuchon: One minor little problem, and that is that the original masonry work of the house was random-course rubble stone and from time to time a rock would

project a little bit farther than the other. The masons didn't understand and didn't appreciate doing things this way. They had been taught masonry in the CCC camps and they learned to cut the face of the stone a nice square and to lay it accordingly.

John Aubuchon: As a result I would show the men the walls and the irregular surface of the wall where one stone projected and another one did not, and they would nod their heads that they understood, and I would maybe lay a rock or two for them in that manner, and then I would turn my back and go to the next stone mason to try to get him to lay a stone to match that already in the wall. The one I had just instructed would very carefully go back to cutting the face of the rock perfectly square. Admittedly the character of the masonry in the walls is considerably different throughout the structure, but it adds a terrific amount of oh, individuality, to that particular building, and I always rather enjoyed the effect that it gave, for me it had character.

John Aubuchon: But the crew was a good hard-working bunch of men, and we enjoyed them very much.

John Aubuchon: One of the really good dependable men now at Navajo National Monument is Bob Black. He has been around the Monument in various capacities for a long, long time. I think at this time he is rated as a caretaker or a maintenance man; but it has taken a lot of work by Jimmy Brewer and myself, Foy Young, and Art White to teach him to do the work. When I first knew Bob Black, he couldn't drive a vehicle, and I taught him to drive by teaching him to drive the Jeep, which was a very harrowing experience for me, and I suppose one for Bob Black. We also taught him to use the road grader. We had a small Galion road grader. Being a very cautious man and feeling insecure on this big piece of equipment, he would put the thing in the compound low gear, the lowest that he had which was also the slowest and proceed down the road at maybe two or three miles an hour. This meant that if he was going out to a point fifteen miles away it took him a long time to get there. To help him get over this fear, I would have him stop, get in the road grader myself, put the thing in maybe second or third or fourth gear, depending on the terrain, and let him stand on the clutch. I would jump out of the cab, then let him take over. He would drive the vehicle, the grader, in that gear until such time as he came to a spot where he had to change gear because of a steep hill or something; then he would put the thing back in low and continue creeping down the road.

John Aubuchon: This was typical. Once they had learned something and learned it well, one method, one manner of doing something — it was extremely difficult to get them to change. But he was one of the most dependable persons I have ever known or had occasion to work with any place.

John Aubuchon: At Canyon de Chelly we had an extremely capable man by the name of David Gorman, a Navajo. He had a large family. By the way, his daughter now has completed her education at various Indian schools and is working at Canyon de Chelly as a clerk or clerk-stenographer, for the superintendent. She has grown up in the Monument and is performing a good job. Her father, David, a great big husky looking fellow, is not handsome. He has from time to time been champion bulldogger around Gallup, New Mexico, and around Flagstaff, Holbrook, the Indian powwow held there on the Reservation. He is a very likeable fellow, capable of doing many, many things. He had broad experience working for the government during the war. He was not a service man, but he had done a lot of defense work.

John Aubuchon: And one time he was working on the trail leading down to White House ruin going into the Canyon and two visitors came along, a man and a lady very nicely dressed, which was a little unusual for that backwoods Reservation country. The woman, realizing that the trail might be a little difficult for her to walk coming back and particularly with high-heeled shoes on, decided that she would sit this one out and wait for her husband to walk down to the ruin and return. She did this; the husband proceeded into the Canyon and visited the White House ruin. In due time the wife got a little bit perturbed because she thought her husband had been gone an unduly long time. She then proceeded into the Canyon to meet him, and it was presumed by the Navajo men working on the trail that she knew where she was going; but instead of turning left after she reached the floor of the Canyon and going to the ruin site, she turned to the right and went upstream.

John Aubuchon: The Navajo figures, "Well, what the heck, we told them where to go and if she wants to go up the Canyon that's all right with us," so they let her go. In due time the husband came along, wanted to know where his wife was, and they told him that she had gone up the Canyon. This disturbed him a lot and he was quite concerned for her safety. So, he and Dave Gorman started out on foot to overtake the wife and bring her back. When they got down into the Canyon then, the husband, not used to the hike and having walked with a great deal of speed, became exhausted, wanted to sit down and rest. Dave Gorman, realizing that every minute that the woman walked unattended up the Canyon by herself, she was merely getting farther and farther away, which meant that he had to walk farther and farther, continued quite rapidly in pursuit of her.

John Aubuchon: Eventually he saw her around a bend of the Canyon ahead of him and he called to her. This startled her a little bit and she began to run. This meant that Dave had to run, and he chased her, running, for quite some distance

up the Canyon. She wasn't too sure just exactly what Dave's intentions were.

John Aubuchon: When he got to her and told her she was going in the wrong direction; she didn't believe him. She was quite mistaken in her directions at that time and entirely mistaken of Dave's intentions. He kept telling her that she was going the wrong way and that if she didn't turn around, he would forcibly take her back, and she said, "Don't lay a hand on me; if you do I'll scream." And Dave told her, "Well, go ahead and scream, but if you scream nobody is going to hear it, and I am getting tired of walking up the Canyon here, so we're going back." He did grab her and turned her around, and she finally said, "Well, take your hands off me and I'll walk down the Canyon alone. I'll do as you say if you just leave me alone." He took his hands off and followed her down the Canyon. She finally came to a spot where the flowing stream about 15 feet wide and about — three or four inches deep. She walked on the left-hand side of this stream and Dave walked on the right. When she got to the widest spot she turned and ran back up the Canyon; she was still convinced she was headed in the right direction. Dave of course just tromped right through the water and caught her, but as he caught her he only got hold of her coat; she slipped her arms out of the coat sleeve and continued to run, but he actually kept up with her and told her that she had to turn around and stop this foolishness and walk down the Canyon or he would hold onto her the entire distance.

John Aubuchon: She wanted to be free of him. She was actually frightened. But she did turn down the Canyon and back to where she met her husband, and everything turned out very well. This is one of the enjoyable stories of Canyon de Chelly. Just what did she think was going to happen to her! It was the last thing that would have or could have happened to her at Canyon de Chelly. But Dave, being the man he is, wasn't going to put up with any foolishness from this gal. He was a very good fellow.

Herbert Evison: John, for a while you were up among the Crows at Custer Battlefield, if I remember your beginning recital correctly. And don't you have any stories from up there?

John Aubuchon: Well, yes. Actually, we found that at Custer Battlefield our relationship with the local Crow Indian and Cheyenne Indians was not all that it could be. We had quite a number of instances of where their cattle would trespass onto the Monument. We would call them up or get hold of them one way or another and ask that they come to get their cattle from Custer Battlefield, and frequently the Indians would deny that the cattle were theirs or would say that nobody was there to drive them home. It would be up to us — a bunch of rangers out on foot — to herd these wild cattle back

out of the Monument; and then it also was up to us to repair the fence to keep them out. We didn't get any assistance from the local Indians at all.

John Aubuchon: I continued my interest in the Indian ceremonials and activities, and my wife and I frequently attended their dances and other activities, thinking that maybe this would help; and I am sure it did to some extent. We let them know that we were actually interested in what they were doing. Part of this interest stems of course from the fact that I am part Indian.

John Aubuchon: We pursued this to the point that they were beginning to be a little bit more helpful, but they still weren't doing as much for us as we thought that they should — they weren't taking care of their own cattle. We could expect more help from them if we had a little better understanding with them. It was my wife's idea that I give them an address on Memorial Day using their own language. This at first seemed quite an impossible thing. Most all of the Crow Indians and Cheyennes spoke English, so it seemed entirely useless to address them in Crow. However, the idea had more and more appeal, and we approached one of the local Crow Indians who had a college education, had his master's degree in anthropology from the University of Southern California. He was willing to go along with this idea and he thought it was pretty good. I wanted to keep the whole thing quiet just in case I couldn't present the Crow speech — or present the speech in Crow — as it should be. I wrote out the text of what I wanted to say to the people as superintendent of the area in welcoming them to Custer Battlefield on this particular Memorial Day and had him translate it. The speech that I wrote was comparatively short in English, but it took up much space when translated into Crow. We can refer to the Chinese or Korean people very simply and know what we're talking about; however, when the Crow Indian is doing this sort of thing they have to refer to the people "as those who have slant eyes and live a long way across the great waters of the West," and all this sort of involved thing.

John Aubuchon: We talk about World War I and World War II and the Indian Wars and we can very definitely pinpoint this as to locale and the period of time in our history and we know what we are talking about. But when you do it in the Crow language, or in other Indian language, I presume, this has to be related to something about which they are informed. In any event, the translation was made. And Crow, as is true of other Indian languages, is an unwritten language, so it had to be written phonetically. I have a minor disagreement with some of the ways that Indian languages are frequently written phonetically, so rewrote it to suiting myself and meeting my own needs, so that I would have the punctuation just right and the emphasis added where it should be.

- John Aubuchon: Well, this we worked on for quite a while, and there were only three of us who knew what was going on, at least as far as I know: that was my wife and Henry Old Coyote and myself. This speech was recorded on tape by Joe for me so that I could hear it repeatedly and could follow it along and get the emphasis where it belonged. But in addition to the audio part of a speech in the Crow language there is the visual part as well, because it is necessary that certain things be accompanied by hand movements and gestures and sign language to further portray what you are saying and to get it all across to the visitors.
- John Aubuchon: Well, I worked on this a lot trying to get it down to the point where it would be a presentable speech, and the day came when it was time to present the speech, and I did welcome everyone to Custer Battlefield on that Memorial Day and did so in English. And at the end of my presentation in English, I simply said, "And to my Crow friends I would like to say—" and then went into my little song and dance of the speech in Crow.
- John Aubuchon: I wasn't able to observe too much of the activity of the crowd, but we were fortunate at that time having Mrs. Louis Kirk — Ruth Kirk — visiting us, and she was in the crowd watching to see what their reactions would be, and my wife was watching, and we had another former employee friend visiting us, Ethel Meinser, former employee at Glacier who had just retired. And these girls looked around the crowd and they had seen where the Indians had paid little or no attention to the proceedings up to that point; but when I began to address them in Crow they began to nudge each other and kind of nod and chatter among themselves about what was going on. They listened very intently, probably for grammatical errors in the speech plus the fact of the unusualness of being addressed in their own language.
- John Aubuchon: At the conclusion, many of the Crow people and Cheyenne came up and greeted me and shook my hand and said this was the first time that a white man had ever actually gone to the trouble of learning to address them in their language; that they had been addresses repeatedly by white people through an interpreter; that they were delighted that a newcomer had come into their area and learned their language and took that sort of an interest in them.
- John Aubuchon: An embarrassing aspect of it all came when the people started to thank me and tell me all about how they felt, in Crow, because I didn't understand them. It was a thrilling experience, one that Ruth and I got a great deal of satisfaction out of, my wife and myself. And this meant that from then on if we had cattle in the Monument or some problem dealing with one of the local Indians, I would call up the father and say, "Look, we have some

cattle up here and from the brand it looks like it must be yours; I think they are your cattle,” and they would say, “Well, they may or may not be mine but I’ll send one of the kids up,” and they would come up on horseback, round up the cattle, take them home, and they would even fix the fence for us. Our relationship with the local Indians improved immeasurably. I never actually got to dance with them at some of their dances simply because I lacked a costume. I had been repeatedly asked to join them and had never quite gotten around to it.

John Aubuchon: There were some of their activities such as participation in the Peyote ceremonies that my wife and I had been invited to attend, but I didn’t feel that, as superintendent of the area, I should participate openly — and I wouldn’t do it underhandedly — in the Peyote ceremonies that were so highly criticized by most all the white people. I thought it would be a good thing to actually participate and know what was going on just because my wife and I were both curious of that aspect of Indian life; and while we are somewhat informed, it wouldn’t be the same as having actually participated in the ceremony. Local pressures were such that we never were able to quite accept this offer, but we were freely invited very, very often.

John Aubuchon: And we had some wonderful Crow Indian boys that we took an interest in, the Old Elk brothers particularly.

Herbert Evison: The what?

John Aubuchon: Old Elk. One of them by the name of Daniel was a good friend of mine. We took a delight in knowing him and he evidently enjoyed knowing us. We encouraged him to go on to school. He got married in high school, which was kind of unusual, and he and his wife, whose name was Rosebud, went to Denver to live and he furthered his education and now he is an accountant with one of the major firms in Denver and I hear from him quite frequently. We have continued our correspondence, and I am very proud of the guy. He is a very, very nice young man.

Herbert Evison: One thing that I am interested in: You spoke of having spoken in Crow but to an audience composed of Crows and Cheyennes. Is their language almost identical?

John Aubuchon: Yes. Enough so that one can understand the other.

Herbert Evison: The Cheyennes were not aggrieved because you picked Crow to speak in rather than Cheyenne?

John Aubuchon: No. I think that they were delighted that someone would go to the trouble to speak in a language that was more or less common to them.

- Herbert Evison: I think that's an extraordinarily interesting incident, John.
- Herbert Evison: While you were at El Morro of course you were I guess not actually in a Zuni Reservation, but they were near neighbors of yours, and how about Zuni employees?
- John Aubuchon: We had one, a young man by the name of Ed Ladd. We were quite a ways beyond the Reservation, actually, about sixty miles south of Gallup, and needed a seasonal ranger. It occurred to me that many of our visitors coming through asked questions about the Zuni Indians because they lived in the area reasonably close and that our visitors would enjoy having a Zuni Indian on the staff. I checked around with local people who were very well acquainted with some of the Zuni people, and the name of Ed Ladd kept cropping up from time to time as being a nice young fellow who had at least a high school education, was acculturated, as we think of acculturation. He had traveled with his parents with railroad shows and had entertained at the Dells in Wisconsin, I think it is. Locals thought that if there was a Zuni boy that could qualify and serve our needs as seasonal ranger it would be Ed.
- John Aubuchon: My wife and I drove over to Zuni, found out where he was, and we were directed out to a cornfield where there was this very good-looking young man following along behind a horse with a little garden plow, cultivating corn. We met him at the fence and discussed the possibilities of him working for the National Park Service, and this was an entirely new prospect as far as he was concerned. We discussed it quite some time and he said well, he would think about it and come out and look the area over and see what the job was really about, and we would get together. This was fine, because I wanted to talk to him some more before we made a final commitment for the job.
- John Aubuchon: He did come, and we hired him. It turned out that his grandmother is the old, old grandmother of Zuni and the lady who had worked with Hodges, Jess Nusbaum, and most anyone who ever did any kind of research work at Zuni had known Ed's grandmother, who was the grand old dame of the place. And so, Ed came to work for us as a seasonal ranger, and while he was there our daughter visited my wife and I, and she and Ed became fairly well acquainted, and found that they had some interests in common, one of which was painting. Ed had never done any painting before, but he had done some pen and ink sketches, and we had some water colors at the house and he took the water colors home with him one night, and the next morning he brought to us a very nice water color painting, offered it to Ruth and me. We said no, thank you, simply because this was his first and he ought to keep it; and suggested to him that maybe he would like to do more and more of this. We gave him the watercolors.

John Aubuchon: Later that year we transferred, but before we did, we suggested to Ed that he submit this watercolor to the Navajo Arts and Crafts Guild for show there at the Gallup ceremonial. He followed along with that suggestion and he won first prize in the class for his very first painting.

John Aubuchon: We had tried to encourage Ed to go to college and had introduced him to Clyde Kluckhorn, who was a good friend and relative of the Vogts who lived out in that area. He was head of the anthropology department at Harvard University for years and one of the primary or leading anthropologists in the country and authorities on Navajo Indians. He took Ed in tow and tried to encourage him then to enter an art school way back in the East some place, and Ed thought this would be a good idea. However, when the last minute came around, Ed decided, "that's an awful ways from home," and he didn't know anybody and the money was an item, and different things like this, and maybe there were some problems at home, I don't know. But he gave up the idea.

John Aubuchon: So, Clyde suggested that he go over and look up Nibbs Hill, Doctor Hill at the University of New Mexico, and that maybe he could help him out in some way. Ed did this and got interested in archaeology at the University in Albuquerque. He worked another season at El Morro, then transferred his interest and work to Bandelier National Monument. He progressed very well at the University, finally got his bachelor's degree in archaeology, and just recently completed all the necessary work for his master's degree. He was here on the mainland within the last two or three months, because he had to return at the unfortunate death of his father. While he was here, he took his oral exams and should be all completed at this time.

John Aubuchon: He did get on permanently, working for the Park Service as park archaeologist at Bandelier; he worked at Montezuma Castle, and had been called into Washington with John Corbett. We needed an archaeologist at the new area, City of Refuge National Historic Park in Hawaii; Ed's name was on the list as being eligible for the job, and you can be assured that he certainly got the first nod. He is in Hawaii doing one bang-up job on the excavations at the City of Refuge.

Herbert Evison: I think that is just wonderful.

Herbert Evison: John, I think we ought to have on here a little something about your service as assistant superintendent over in Hawaii, and about your feelings about accepting an assistant superintendency.

John Aubuchon: Well, Herb, I don't know that this is a feeling that is shared by all but certainly this was the way I felt about it: I had some minor reservations about accepting the job in Hawaii, and I'll admit freely that the final

decision to accept or not to accept was based solely on the fact that we enjoyed working for the Park Service and one of the places we wanted to live and work was in Hawaii. The reservations I had were outweighed by the desirability of living in Hawaii.

John Aubuchon: The reservations didn't last long. I soon found that there was really no problem involved. I was extremely fortunate in having an opportunity to work with Fred Johnston, a Park Service man with great and varied experience, who had also been an assistant superintendent at one time himself. Whether this helped in our mutual understanding or not I can't say, or whether this was just Fred's nice congenial personality.

John Aubuchon: We had minor clashes on things, as is expected at any level of operation between any two people. We had no serious clashes. I am sure that Fred recognized the fact that as a previous superintendent I might conceivably have a different approach to an objective than he had, but we never under any circumstances had any differences of opinion as to what the ultimate goal or the ultimate objectives were. We had no problems of any magnitude at all. I do think that this is something that any individual who goes into an assistant superintendent's job from a superintendent has to consider when he accepts the job. Under one condition he is the boss in the area, and in the other condition he is working for a boss whose immediate wishes and desires are his first concern and that his whole line of work is to do the things or to see that things are done as that superintendent wants them done.

John Aubuchon: It takes understanding on the part of someone going into the job as much as it takes understanding on the part of the superintendent for whom the former superintendent is working as an assistant. It certainly is nothing that can't be worked out with understanding.

John Aubuchon: But someone very recently — and I think it was Horace Albright — mentioned that someone had told him one time, that he was fairly sure that it was nearly an impossibility to make an assistant superintendent out of a superintendent. I don't really go along with that entirely because I think that I was a good assistant superintendent for Fred Johnston. I think it can be done but certainly it can't be done without total and complete understanding on the part of both individuals concerned.

Herbert Evison: I think that's a very important observation.

Herbert Evison: I notice we are just about at the end of this tape, John, and in my book it's a good one. I am immensely obliged to you for making yourself available this way this morning, and it has been a very, very pleasant experience for me.

[END OF INTERVIEW]